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FROM

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,

Class of 1838.

Received Nov. 14, 1891.

Via Crucis.

Via Crucis.

RECORD OF A DIVINE LIFE

AND

PICTURE OF A DIVINE DEATH.

BY

WILLIAM MACCALL.

rec

LONDON :

GEORGE STANDRING, 8, FINSBURY STREET.

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Nov. 14, 1891.

LOWELL BEQUEST.

Aia Crucis.

EARLY in the summer of 1875 my dear wife, Alice Haselden, who had long been ailing, grew very pale and thin and weak. She had a worn, a weary, an anxious look; but above all my daughter and I were struck by the ghastly pallor. Alice did not complain, for she was not in the habit of complaining. It was manifest, however, that she deeply grieved she had not strength for her accustomed tasks, some of which were terribly trying for her fragile frame. Month after month the feebleness, the emaciation and the paleness, became more and more notable. Heroically after her wont, Alice struggled against a mysterious malady, the characteristics of which were exhaustion and feverish disquietude rather than pain. Rest she obviously needed, and rest from her active nature she was unwilling to take. She would only so far yield as to go to bed sooner than usual; but she persisted in rising early to take her part in household occupations, though it was often too plain that she was unfit to rise at all.

At the beginning of December she was attacked by strange shiverings as soon as she got up in the

morning. They could not be ascribed to the coldness of the weather, and they did not seem the result of fever. We sent for a doctor, who told us that my dear wife was suffering from anæmia, and that it would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that she had not a drop of blood in her body.

All the winter my dear wife hovered between life and death, and we did not expect her to recover. The doctor, who was extremely attentive and kind, and who displayed much skill, gave her large doses of iron, the chief remedy for anæmia, and as Alice was able to take nourishing food, she gradually, as summer came on, gained a little vigor, though she continued to be an invalid.

At the approach of winter the disease returned with all its most alarming symptoms. The doctor treated it as he had previously treated it. We despaired of Alice's recovery as we had despaired before. But summer brought, as it had before brought, amendment and hope, and it seemed as if the ailment had been completely vanquished though much debility still remained.

In the autumn of 1877, as in the two previous autumns, I went to the South West of England to visit some old friends. On the 14th October my amiable and estimable host at Exeter, Frederick Burrington, with whom I had been intimate for more than thirty-six years, was struck by apoplexy in my presence, and died after some hours of unconsciousness. Filled with gloomy feelings and gloomier forebodings, I returned to Bexley Heath

at the end of October, and was shocked to find that my dear wife was falling into her former deplorable state. It was no longer also simple debility from which she suffered. The malady, whatever its character or its cause, was evidently growing more complicated, consequently more alarming and more fitted to baffle medical sagacity. For a few weeks after I came back from the South West, Alice spent some hours with us every day downstairs. After a while, she found the fatigue of ascending and descending too great. Thenceforth she was a prisoner, first in one bedroom of our small abode, and then in another which was more cheerful. But she was not confined wholly to bed till about two months before her death ; rose to take tea and sat up as long as she could in order to sleep the better, for sleeplessness now began to be one of her chief afflictions.

Neither she nor we had ceased to hope, believing that the same means which had been victorious before, might be victorious again. Yet as if haunted by a presentiment of coming woe, Alice seemed to have a melancholy pleasure in recalling the past, and especially the days of her childhood, when at the farm of her Uncle and Aunt Unsworth, near Chorley, and at Brook House, the abode of her grandmother Tickle, near Tottington, she had been very very happy. To the last her tastes were those of an innocent child, and it was the rural sights and sounds which had gladdened her early years that her heart was fondest of bringing back. The

beautiful scenes round Crediton, which had for a season been our home, and where our daughter had been born, were not forgotten. Across those sweet and holy memories the forms of beloved ones no longer with the living darted. The song of the birds, the murmur of the streams, the rustle of the leaves were hushed, the flowers were withered, and those were gone, for ever gone, who had made Nature so enchanting.

A maid servant of Uncle and Aunt Unsworth told Alice's youngest sister, Sarah Haselden, that when staying at the farmhouse, Alice used at the gloaming to walk up and down in the large kitchen and sing softly to herself. Here there was more than contentment, than cheerfulness; there was the piety of a grateful soul that asked little from God, that found delight in commune with itself, and transfigured the smallest exultation into worship.

There had not been much sunshine in Alice Haselden's life; it had been a life of toil and trial, and tribulation. But such sunshine as there had been she revived to make joyous with a kind of pathetic joy the last winter evenings we were fated to spend together.

One Christmas day as she lay in bed, I rushed up to her room with a bunch of holly. The moment she saw the rich green leaves and the red clustering berries she burst into tears. She sat up, took the bunch into her hand, gazed at it tenderly, and wept uncontrollably. What could I say or do to console her? The holly had evoked in her

soul a half-beautiful, half-prophetic vision. Chorley, Tottington, Crediton, and all she had loved and lost, were brightly arrayed before her ; then the shadow of a tomb darkened everything. She might be sleeping in the grave the next time the holly bushes put forth their berries.

Her birthday on the 27th January, brought to her a kindred vision, as beatific on the one hand, as sadly prophetic on the other. My daughter's tears and mine gushed as we clasped the emaciated form and kissed the pallid cheeks and the almost equally pallid lips.

The disease grew more and more complicated, more and more terrible. A crucifixion of three years was accumulating, intensifying, its final pangs. The more sublimely patient, the more divinely resigned Alice was, the more miserable were my daughter and I made by the spectacle of Alice's anguish, and by the knowledge that we could do nothing to relieve. It was not of herself, but of us that Alice seemed to think. From anxiety, sleeplessness and other causes I was looking very ill, and Alice often expressed to my daughter her pity for me. Toiling, watching, nursing, night and day, my daughter got little rest. It was not respecting her own torments that Alice made lamentations, but respecting her daughter Bessie's careworn and exhausted look. Moreover, though Alice knew that we were devoted to her, that we were ready to make all sacrifices for her, she not merely abstained as much as she could from giving us trouble, but

thanked us warmly for the most trifling service. She was as courteous in her mode of asking, and as grateful in her mode of receiving, as if she had no claim on our affection.

Her patience and resignation were the more remarkable and beautiful, that besides being grievously tormented she was wholly withdrawn from those household duties which had been her pride and pleasure. That genius of method, of order, of economy she possessed in a supreme degree, had to slumber; those hands which had always been finishing or finding some task, were idle. Inaction she had always dreaded, and now inaction had come to her in its most formidable shape. Nevertheless she bowed her heart meekly, submissively, to the inevitable. It was her instinctive wisdom, and her pious and prayerful spirit, which gave her peace.

If Alice's birthday had been sombre, had been clouded by fears, my own birthday on the 25th of February was incomparably more so. On that day an old medical friend, for whose character we had the highest esteem, in whose skill we had boundless confidence, whom we had known for more than thirty years, and to whom we had been often indebted, generously journeyed from London to Bexley Heath, minutely and thoroughly to examine Alice's condition. We were the more fervently thankful to him that he had for some years retired from practice. After the examination he declared to me, not only that my dear wife was dangerously ill, which I knew, but that she had probably one of

the most horrible of all maladies, a malignant and inevitably fatal affection of the kidneys. He said that the anæmia was simply a result or symptom of the disease; that diminution, impoverishment, deterioration of the blood, were the disease's chief characteristics. What should have nourished the blood passed away; what should have passed away entered the blood and poisoned it. Our friend's conjecture was too soon confirmed. I revealed the tragical fact to my daughter, but shrank from revealing it to my dear wife, because I wished hope to live in her breast after it had died in my own, and not because I supposed she had not courage to bear the revelation.

Soon after our friend's visit, the disease which had been slowly and for years killing my dear wife, made rapid and frightful inroads. Neuralgia with its keenest bitterest arrows assailed her while the poison in her blood was doing its deadly work. She could not make the smallest movement without moaning or shrieking. From the neuralgia she had now to pass the weary hours wholly in bed. Though movement caused her the most exquisite anguish, she could not lie still. To vanquish the pain and the restlessness, and to bring the sleep which was so needful, but which Nature refused, it became at last unavoidable to inject morphia daily into the tortured limbs. The remedy was almost worse than the ailments it had to mitigate or subdue. It deadened pain, and it brought sleep; sleep, however, of a horribly unnatural kind; but it

destroyed the appetite, and perchance conspiring with the disease, caused distressing nausea. Little food was taken, and not much of what was taken was retained. Thus then it was obvious that my dear wife must die of inanition, even if the disease itself had not been fatal. She did not, however, know that she was dying till about a month before the great change—the great deliverer came. One day she calmly asked him, who had been her medical attendant in previous years, and who was her medical attendant now, whether she was likely to recover a third time, as she had already through his help recovered twice. He assured her that her recovery was impossible. If she heard the announcement with sorrow, it was chiefly on account of the two beings whom she loved best, and who could not fail to be most desolate when she was gone.

Her affections were too deep to be demonstrative. They were seen in her unostentatious and ungrudging labours and sacrifices for our benefit. Forgetful of herself, she strove to gather all comforts and enjoyments around us, but she seldom caressed us. Now, however, it seemed as if she could not satisfy the hunger of her soul otherwise, than by endearments. Ever and evermore she turned towards us her patient pathetic pleading eyes, those large dark brown eyes that were so lovely. They had an eloquence which her lips refused, for in the extremity of her weakness she could seldom speak above a whisper. When our daughter knelt by the bedside of her dear mother, the mother stroked her child's hair as

tenderly as she had stroked it in her child's infancy. Often, too, when I was looking with a sympathy intensified by despair at the wan and wasted face of my dear wife, she made a sign for me to kiss her. What tragical ecstasy there was in kissing lips that might be cold in death ere another sun rose to warm with his beams the world !

About a week before she died, and when we were standing by her bedside, Alice took her two rings from her finger ; gave the wedding ring to me, and the other ring to our daughter Bessie. Our immense and inexpressible grief inspired dear Alice to utter a few words of wonderful pathos and beauty, words glowing with Biblical grandeur. She fervently entreated us to take courage, to love each other, and to trust in God ! When I implored her to pardon me for having been sometimes unkind to her from my impetuous character, she would not listen to me. Love such as hers, so deep, so tender, so true, so abiding, had nothing to forgive.

As month after month the gloomy winter dragged wearily on, how overwhelmingly touching to me and Bessie were Alice's occasional gleams of hope ! One of the last times Alice was able to sit up, and when we were taking tea with her in her room, she said that we three might yet take tea together downstairs. Alice's hopeful speech made me and Bessie exchange looks of despair.

Almost to the last the singularly clear intellect of my dear wife struggled against uræmia, the final form of the most cruel of maladies, and against the

stupifying effects of the morphia. But one evening when we knew that death was not far off, her mind was manifestly confused and wandering. She was unable to recognise her daughter, and thought her a stranger, whereat, as was natural, Bessie was greatly distressed.

Exhausted by the hideous, the execrable disease, exhausted by lack of food, my dear wife, early in the forenoon of the 16th April, fell into a half delirious, half comatose state. Next forenoon, when she was conscious for a few instants, I asked her if she knew me and my daughter. She made a faint affirmative sign, then sank into her unconscious condition. Not long after she cried in a strong voice, in striking contrast to her usual whisper, "I come! I come!" These were her last words. She was communing in spirit with her father, her mother, her sisters, her brothers, all her kinsfolk, all her friends who had already entered God's Paradise.

My daughter and I who had never before seen any one die, were destined to see our dearest Alice die. Bessie stood on one side of the bed, I on the other. No one was near to share our sorrow or to comfort us as we watched and wept. About two hours before death, the face, the hands, the feet of Alice grew cold and clammy. Touching them was like touching wet marble, and sent a terrible thrill to our inmost heart; a leaden sky, a heavy atmosphere, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, deepened the mysterious horror of the scene. It seemed as if Nature was sympathising with, and

yet mocking our misery. Very calmly Alice died at half-past four in the afternoon of Wednesday the 17th April, 1878. In an hour more the moon was full, as if symbolising the completeness and the beauty of a noble life.

We gazed at the face of the dead with a bewilderment of anguish we had never known before. She who had made existence precious to us had departed to the Land of Silence; and what interest could we thenceforth take in the things of earth?

Till the coffin lid shut them from us for ever, the features of Alice showed no trace of decay. They were unspeakably sweet and beautiful, and their rich repose spake of the heaven near, and not of the tortures which had been borne.

It was in Easter Week that Alice exchanged a bed of pain for the rest of the grave. On Saturday the 20th April, at half-past four in the afternoon, she was buried in the Bexley Heath churchyard. Rain had fallen in torrents all day. But a few minutes before the funeral the sun burst forth, and it shone on the coffin as it slowly sank into the ground. The larks soaring into the sky after the rain, sang the requiem, and the flowers on the graves offered lavish incense to Him who gives and who takes away.

Well was it that Alice should be buried between the Crucifixion Eve and the Resurrection Morn. For truly she had been crucified, and now she had gone through the gates of the tomb to enjoy her heritage of bliss.

It was not well, however, that she should die in spring, the season that she loved best, and which had so often revived her being.

From many friends, both during Alice's illness and after her death, we received great kindness, for which we must be for ever grateful. Yet spite of the sympathy so abundantly shown, we felt every day sadder and lonelier.

Next to the proofs of devotedness our friends and we gave Alice, it was prayer that helped to sustain and solace her when rent and racked by countless pangs, which seemed heaped on her by God, to see how much a poor human creature was capable of bearing.

In simplest words I have given the brief record of a holy death, and now in simplest words let me give the brief record of a divine life.

Alice Haselden was born at Bolton, Lancashire, on the 27th January, 1813. She was the second of the eleven children of John Haselden and Elizabeth Tickle. John Haselden was a leading tradesman of the town, and was held in the highest esteem by the citizens for integrity, for modesty, for every public and private virtue. An internal cancer brought him in 1835 to the grave, when he was not much more than fifty years of age. He left his family in prosperous circumstances; but misfortune followed misfortune, and by degrees the family fell into sorest straits. Elizabeth Tickle was eminently handsome, and was of a genial and generous nature.

Her cheerful temper enabled her to bear numerous and great tribulations. The hardest of these was the loss of her children, all of whom but three she had survived, when she died at Liverpool, on the 28th April, 1877, at the age of eighty-seven. She had lived for many years with her youngest daughter, Sarah Haselden, who tenderly and devotedly cared for her to the last.

From her earliest days, Alice Haselden was a strenuous toiler, and the chief burden of household duties fell upon one who always laboured far beyond her strength. Her childhood was not unhappy. She had the kindest of parents, and home abounded with every comfort. William Unsworth, who had married her father's sister, carried on business as a farmer near Chorley, as we have seen. He and his wife were noble Christian souls, and as they had no children of their own, they always gave the gladdest welcome to John Haselden's children. No less cordial was the welcome these received from John Haselden's mother, who spent her closing years at the farm. She was a woman of angelic simplicity, purity and affection, and Alice often recalled the rare virtues, the sweet graces of her grandmother Haselden. It was in William Unsworth's abode that Alice Haselden spent the sweetest hours of her childhood. She also, as has been said, paid frequent visits to Brook House, near Tottington, where her grandmother Tickle, whom she fondly loved, resided. Chorley and Tottington summed up the romance of Alice Haselden's existence. They were the Edens

of her heart, and in her declining years, when disease gave a deeper pathos to the past, they were ever in her imagination, and frequently on her lips.

The chief characteristic of Alice Haselden was a calm unostentatious sympathetic heroism that was not conscious of itself. She lived for others without thinking that there was anything remarkable or meritorious in her self-denial or self-sacrifice. Her heroism was all the more beautiful, that she was somewhat inclined to despondency, though her bright intellect and sound sense kept her from dwelling on imaginary evils. Heroism should have as sustenance and reward, joy, but Alice Haselden's heroism was not joyous; it was resolute and persistent; it was pure devotedness. Much it was needed in the household, when John Haselden's valiant and guiding presence was withdrawn. For in addition to severe struggles for the bread that perisheth, sickness came, and the threshold was darkened by the shadow of death. When not engaged in domestic occupations, Alice Haselden was often found by the bedside of a dying brother or a dying sister. Pleasures, amusements, she sought not. Her fine natural gifts had been well cultivated, and she read diligently French and English books when she could snatch a few moments from earnest and pressing employments. Profoundly religious, she never spoke about religion. Her piety was not ascetical, did not deaden her relish for congenial companionship, and simple delights. In conversation she made no attempt to shine, was always

satisfied to be effaced by more pretentious people. She was as notable for humility as for heroism and holiness.

In January 1837, I became minister of the Moorlane chapel, Bolton. The Haseldens were Unitarians, and were members of the congregation. I often called on them, chiefly attracted by my interest in Mary Haselden, a girl of singular beauty and sweetness, whom consumption was slowly killing. She died on the 9th April, 1837, her eighteenth birthday. The interest I felt in Mary, I transferred to Alice, whom week after week I had seen nursing Mary with unwearied love. On the 21st September, 1837, I asked Alice to be my wife, and she consented, won perchance chiefly by the compassion I had shown for her sister. My position and prospects were by no means brilliant. I had come to a struggling and declining congregation, and I had not the popular gifts that could convert a torpid mass, disheartened by defections and disappointments, into a living force. And perhaps where I failed, a man of more rhetorical skill would have failed no less. I was zealous enough, but not discreetly zealous. My zeal was that of an enthusiastic dreamer; it was too idealistic to move the multitude, while on the other hand it offended the more serious or fastidious members of my small congregation. With a sort of headlong fervor I threw myself into certain agitations, such as that against the Corn Laws, and that in favour of the so-called Charter. My folly keenly pained Alice

Haselden, who saw how unsuited I was for the vulgar and vulgarising work of the agitator, how much better fitted I was for noiseless labours like her own. She never reproached, but she often earnestly remonstrated, and her remonstrances were not without effect. Very dreary would the four years I spent at Bolton have been but for my intercourse with the Haselden family. That intercourse gave those sad years a great charm, and compensated for much disenchantment and misery. Mrs. Haselden treated me with a mother's kindness, and Alice by her unfailing affection encouraged me to hope when I was ready to despair. How desolate without love so devoted my life would have been!

At the end of 1840, I left Bolton, feeling that but for the goodness of God in giving me Alice Haselden, four years of my youthful existence would have been wasted, and worse than wasted. In the deep gloom of Winter, and with a sinking heart, I tore myself away. Toward London the lonely I turned my steps. At Brixton Unitarian chapel I preached for a month as a candidate, but was rejected because some of the leading members deemed me too mystical. For two months I preached at Bristol Unitarian chapel, but was rejected because some of the leading members deemed me indiscreet, too frank and impulsive. Thereupon I passed some weeks with my old and dear university friend, James Forrest, Unitarian minister at Devonport. Dissatisfied with Unitarianism, Forrest finally became a Roman Catholic, and died at Fairmount

near New York in 1859. But in the spring of 1841 he had not yet discovered how inadequate a Rationalistic faith is to satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul. He and I were converts from orthodoxy, and we had brought to our new belief orthodox ardour. The first thing which repelled us was Unitarian frigidity. After a while we were still more repelled by Unitarian shallowness and narrowness. However, during the first years of our Unitarian apostleship we tried our best to be hopeful. My sojourn at Devonport was as pleasant as my unsettled circumstances and my absence from Alice Haselden permitted it to be. Forrest and I talked of German philosophy, for he had been reading Kant's and I had been reading Fichte's works, and we made excursions to Mount Edgecombe, Tavistock, and other places. In May I was invited to preach at Crediton, where there is a fine old Presbyterian chapel standing grandly on Bowden Hill. I found acceptance with the congregation, but after remaining three or four months I thought that pastoral activity in a busier district would suit me better. Foolishly, therefore, I turned my back on delicious Devonshire, and spent three months at Coseley near Dudley. Of grimy Coseley I soon grew tired, and in December I returned to Crediton as minister of the Presbyterian chapel. My salary of a hundred pounds a year did not seem to justify me in taking a wife. But Alice Haselden and I saw that if we did not get married now we should never get married at all. During my wanderings

to and fro we had constantly corresponded, and Alice's letters had cheered and strengthened me, besides revealing more and more the purity and nobleness of her nature.

On the 3rd March, 1842, we were married at Bolton. If after an engagement of four years and a half, Alice Haselden was happy in being a bride, it was not without deep depression that she spoke a farewell, possibly a final farewell, to her home, to her brothers and sisters, to her largehearted, warmhearted mother. On our way to Crediton we spent a short time at Bristol with my admirable friend, Robert Gibson, and his no less admirable wife. At Crediton, Alice was cordially welcomed by everyone. For a time we lived in lodgings in gloomy North Street. We then occupied the house at the corner of Saint Martin's Lane, and facing Saint Lawrence's Green. Here we spent two years of exceeding happiness with no presentiment of the terrible trials about to assail us. A small legacy had come to Alice from the death of an uncle, and thus our chief anxiety was considerably lessened. I worked very hard. On Sunday I preached morning and evening. On Sunday afternoon I had a Bible class. On Monday evening I was present at a music class; on Tuesday evening at a class for conversation, either on an address which I delivered at the commencement, or on miscellaneous topics. Sometimes also I lectured at Crediton and Exeter. To add to my slender income, I gave lessons in languages. Among my pupils were the two sons of

the master of the Grammar school who was a clergyman of the Church of England. They became doctors. Doubtless they have long forgotten their old teacher. Another of my pupils is now an Anglican clergyman.

For study I had not much time, but by devoting the early mornings to Greek, I got through the works of Homer, Xenophon, and one or two other authors. I had learned Greek before going to the university. When at the university I was three years in the class of Sandford, who was accomplished alike as scholar and as teacher. Probably through Sandford's influence, Greek grew very fascinating to me ; but never except at Crediton was I able to yield to the fascination.

Alice and I had very simple tastes and simple habits, and though we did not war with the conventionalities, we were not enslaved by them. Our pleasures were as simple as our tastes and our habits. My wife had true delight in aiding me in my pastoral labours, and her tenderly compassionate heart overflowed with joy when we were able to relieve the needy, or to procure succor for them. Sweet were the evenings we spent with our friends ; sweet were the walks we took with them in the lovely neighbourhood of Crediton ; but it was our home which gave us the sweetest hours of all. Besides being a perfect wife, Alice was a perfect housekeeper. She had the thrift which makes the most of a very small income, and out of the slenderest materials she could erect a vast fabric of comfort.

She always dressed very plainly, but very neatly ; her natural look of refinement, made her attire however humble becoming. All her features were fine, but especially her mouth, and her large dark brown eyes. Her broad and lofty brow added to the intellectual expression of her face ; her magnificent silky hair which inclined to black in hue, grew grey some years before she died, but the shining silkiness seemed to increase with the greyness. Never except when needful was her rich soft voice heard ; yet she was instinctively eloquent, and always expressed herself with elegance, precision, accuracy, and facility. The most unassuming, the most retiring of women, she had nevertheless perfect ease of manner, and that quiet dignity which is so rare ; but the habitual humility of her demeanour prevented the dignity from looking like either pride or coldness. No one could be less capricious and moody ; not even illness could affect the evenness of her character, of her temper, of her path. She had promptitude in all her actions, quickness in all her movements, and did with a sort of military dispatch whatever needed to be done. Alas ! many things that needed not to be done she did, and this was her besetting error. Her ideal of cleanliness, method, order, continually tormented her, and was never satisfied, and she exhausted her fragile frame in making her loved home as bright, as beautiful as a fairy palace. All her faults, like this particular fault, were simply virtues in excess, and whenever in my hotly impulsive fashion I blamed her, I bitterly repented, for I

knew that she was merely striving after an unattainable perfection. Verily, verily, I was not worthy of this saintly creature, and I sometimes harshly judged her when I should have dwelt with contrition on my own defects.

On the 1st June, 1843, our daughter and only child was born. The life, both of the mother and of the child, was in sore peril; but when both mother and child were saved, there was great rejoicing. Mrs. Haselden had come from Lancashire to Crediton to be present at her daughter's confinement, and the short time she remained with us after the birth of the child had unspeakable rapture, mingled with devout thankfulness. In honour of Elizabeth Tickle, Alice's mother, and of Elizabeth Murdoch, my mother, we gave the child the name of Elizabeth; but we fell into the habit of calling her Bessie, and Bessie she is still called. On Bessie, Alice and I lavished our affection the more opulently, that Bessie was subject, and continued for a number of years to be subject to certain dangerous ailments, such as croup. The best, the wisest, the most devoted of wives, Alice could not fail to be the best, the wisest, the most devoted of mothers. It is often said that an only child must be a spoiled child; Bessie was an exception. Alice loved Bessie with her whole heart; she trained her, however, admirably, guided by nothing but her own instinctive sagacity.

When Bessie had begun to talk, and to walk, how gladly I threw books aside and carried her into

the fields! And how joyous Alice was when we returned from our rambles! Bessie made our home abound with every blessing but wealth. Our servant, a generous, clever, witty, but wayward young girl called Jessie, who had a Scottish mother, as Bessie had a Scottish father, was as fond of Bessie as of a sister, and Jessie taught Bessie all sorts of amusing sayings and amusing ways.

Our half idyllic life was destined to be as brief as it was enchanting. To resent a fancied wrong, a member of my congregation, a wicked man, and assuredly the most malignant and vindictive man I have ever known, and the most unscrupulous, resolved to ruin me, and he succeeded. He, a trustee of the chapel, induced the other trustees, most of whom were his relatives, to write me in August, 1844, an insulting letter, accusing me of violent political declamation in my sermons. The charge was as false as the affront was gross. It had no further foundation or justification than that in one of my discourses I made an allusion to the Game Laws and the Corn Laws. I read the letter to the congregation. The members indignantly declared the accusation to be a slander, and resolved to stand bravely by me. This devotedness was very touching and encouraging; but it could not hinder the trustees from achieving their diabolical scheme. My character, for honour and integrity was unassailable, and they made no attempt to assail it. They persisted, however, in representing me as a political firebrand. As some of them were

very rich, greedy credence was given to the shameless calumny. Having done what they could to rob me of my good name, they next tried, and with much more success, another fashion of robbery. Most of my salary as a minister was derived from the chapel endowments. These the trustees proceeded to mismanage in a manner as dishonest as it was illegal. The result was that for two years I received less than forty pounds a year. Alice and I were made unspeakably miserable by the infamous and cruel persecution which was renewed every day in some fresh form. In the main the members of the congregation were loyal; but some from dread of the rich trustees proved recreant. My admirable Bristol friend, already spoken of, courageously pleaded my cause, and the cause of the congregation; but he was almost our only champion. Other Unitarians who mingled in the wretched controversy, took the side of the trustees, and the chief Unitarian newspaper, though called the "Inquirer," accepted the statements of the trustees without inquiring, and proclaimed my usefulness in Crediton to be gone. I was a criminal because I was a victim! What right had I to resist rich men who first calumniated and then plundered? Wearied by a conflict that brought me nothing but poverty and pain I left Crediton at Midsummer, 1846. It was not without the keenest anguish that Alice and I severed ourselves from a congregation which had given us so many proofs of attachment, and that we snapped the bond that bound us to Crediton, which Alice

tenderly and ardently clung to as to a second home.

My health, my spirits were completely broken, and I was, besides, in a sad and sombre hypochondriacal condition. During the months of July and August, my wife, our daughter, and I, found a resting place at Bolton, and Mrs. Haselden was, what she had ever been, the kindest of the kind.

Toward the end of August we three poor hapless creatures, who had been exiled from Crediton by sons of Satan, who are now with their father, found ourselves in London. We took lodgings at No. 4, Carburton Street, near Fitzroy Square. They were humble enough, but our landladies, Mrs. Dawson and Mrs. Steele, two sisters who were widows, were very honest and obliging. How lonely, how depressed we felt in our lodgings can easily be imagined. The change and the contrast pressed heavily on me, more heavily on Alice, heaviest of all on Bessie, accustomed to run up and down in a garden, to wander with me in the fields, and to receive the most loving attentions from our dear Crediton friends. I have often said that my career might be described by the three words,—entanglement, fatality, ghastliness. For the more I aspired to purity, nobleness; perfection, the more I was ever thrown into what was entangled, fatal, and ghastly. Perchance my fastidiousness and sensitiveness must bear much of the blame. In any case I was wholly unfitted for the struggle on which I was now entering. An able and

generous physician, Dr. Catherwood, did much to improve my health and thus to restore my working power. Mr. John Stuart Mill introduced me to Mr. Rintoul, the editor of the "Spectator," and I contributed some articles to that periodical in the concluding months of 1846. He also introduced me to Mr. George Lillie Craik, who besides being very friendly to me, always professed warmly to admire my essays in the "Critic," the first of which appeared in July, 1846, being so far as I remember my earliest contribution to a London periodical. Besides writing for the press I began to preach in Unitarian chapels. I had often as a preacher to travel great distances, and sometimes the remuneration was barely sufficient to cover my expenses. Among the places I most frequently visited was Royston, Hertfordshire. To a small but earnest and sympathetic congregation, which worshipped in the Unitarian chapel, Stamford Street, Blackfriars, London, I repeatedly held forth. My pulpit engagements extended our very limited circle of friends. But for this the loneliness of our Carburton Street abode, and the weariness of our London life, would have been intolerable. Our anxieties were as terrible as our sense of desolation was crushing. With all my strivings, it was little that I could earn, and Bessie and I had incessant and serious attacks of illness. In the presence of our many troubles, Alice was not cheerful, but she was, as usual, brave. Though she no longer had those household occupations for which she had such consummate aptitudes, her hands

were always busy. She sewed, she knitted ; as she had a much more legible hand than I, she copied for the printer's benefit most of what I wrote for the press. Nevertheless, apart from the solitude, imprisonment in the two small rooms, and an unwearied round of sedentary employments, were very irksome to her. When the weather was fine I took Bessie to Regent's Park, and Primrose Hill, and Alice occasionally accompanied us. But the walks in the London Parks, gave her small pleasure compared with the old Crediton rambles.

We were driven to desperate shifts to keep out of debt, and we had to deny ourselves many things most people would have deemed absolutely needful.

Our mournful and monotonous existence was in the summer of 1847 diversified by a residence of a fortnight at Southampton. While at Southampton we visited the Isle of Wight, accompanied by our friend, Robert Gibson, and one or two of his children. For this holiday we were indebted to his generosity, and subsequently his bounty was more than once of signal service to me. .

Late in the summer of 1849, we went for three months to Royston. On Sunday I preached in the Unitarian chapel. The other days I did no work but what was indispensable. We on the whole had considerable enjoyment from our long vacation. The bracing air of Royston did us all much good ; we received hospitalities not to be forgotten, and we formed friendships not to be broken but by death. One drawback was that we lived in a street

so dull that it was called Dead Street. Spite of Dead Street, and spite of the aristocratic coldness of certain persons with whom we associated, and who could not appreciate such sterling qualities as hers, Alice our noble Alice had a revival, if only for a brief season, of the old Chorley and Tottington and Crediton happiness.

To go back in the autumn to our prison or sepulchre in Carburton Street, was for us but one of innumerable vicissitudes and tribulations. Before I went to Royston, and for a short time after I returned, I had as pupil the son of a celebrated actor. This engagement I obtained through the recommendation of a great author, who often took much trouble to oblige me, though doubtless he found the task a hard one, from my lack of what is named worldly wisdom, a lack springing from my romantic character, and my idealistic tendencies.

In the summer of 1850, our sombre lodgings were brightened by an unexpected visitor. A venerable gentleman, who had formerly been a Captain in the Navy, called, and told us that he had been much struck by some passages in my "Elements of Individualism," a copy of which he had found in the Army and Navy Club. The passages related to Spinoza, to whose philosophy this gentleman was passionately devoted. Everything respecting Spinoza he eagerly read. But moreover he had a profound acquaintance with the mystics of every land, and of every age. He immensely enlarged my knowledge of mystical

regions, which had long attracted me. The visit and my subsequent intercourse with the earnest disciple of Spinoza, had a vivid interest for Alice, not by reason of our friend's mystical beliefs or philosophical speculations, but because he was like herself, one of those natural saints, who without reference to dogma instinctively soar to the very heart of God.

A lady who sometimes came to hear me preach at the Stamford Street Chapel, and who sympathised with a few of my ideas, took compassion on us, and principally on Alice, whom she saw pining away for want of household activities. She induced us, Midsummer, 1851, to take, and she assisted us in furnishing, a cottage at Streatham, No. 15, New Leigham Road. Alice was once more the mistress of a house, and that by itself was for her an ineffable rapture. With Bessie also I could stroll on Streatham Common, and Tooting Common. But we soon saw a good deal to make us discontented with Streatham, whose damp soil injured my health, always much affected by climatic influences. Besides Streatham was at the time an isolated place, and we felt almost lonelier than in our London lodgings. We therefore removed at Midsummer, 1852, to No. 16, The Grove, Saint John's Hill, Wandsworth.

Here we had a climate totally different from that of Streatham, but as unfitted for Bessie, as that of Streatham had been for me. As for Alice the climate she most regarded was the climate of home; if that was genial and gladsome, she was little

disposed to murmur. Near us was Wandsworth Common and Clapham Common, and not very far off was Wimbledon Common, so that there was no lack of pleasant walks. To Wimbledon Common, I had to be a solitary pilgrim, but to Clapham Common and Wandsworth Common Bessie often went with me, Alice rarely. Her indefatigable hands were busy, and she had seldom leisure for what to her was a supreme enjoyment, a ramble in beautiful weather, through beautiful scenes, with her husband and her child.

In October I was attacked by inflammation of the brain, which was followed by nervous fever, and then by complete prostration, so that for six months I was the most helpless mortal in the world. This fresh tragedy dwarfed into insignificance all past tragedies, even the Crediton persecution and its disastrous consequences. Till the inflammation of the brain was subdued, I was delirious, and yet conscious of all I did. My most eager desire, my fiercest impulse, was to destroy myself, and the two beings who were so dear to me. Every form of anguish had been mine; but my delirium had strange and horrible pangs of its own. They were as strange and horrible for Alice to behold as for me to suffer. But though they appalled her, they could not lessen her obedience to heroic duty and angelic affection. Whenever we had any fresh tribulation our old foe, poverty, was sure to be its companion. And how could poverty fail to come when for six months I was unable

to work, and when sickness doubled the expenses of the household? We were not, however, left without sympathy. Yet the sympathy sometimes took humiliating and even insulting shapes. As Alice and I, so far from being covetous, were naturally inclined to extreme disinterestedness; as we were hard and unwearied workers; as my illness had been caused as much by exhausting toil, as by great anxiety; as my failures to gain worldly success had their explanation and justification in the loftiness of my aspirations; Alice and I resented the interference of certain persons, who gave us little pity, and much wise counsel, and who seeing us unfortunate, thought that we must have the spirit of paupers.

Though I am a man of many moods, I am not a fickle or capricious man, am persistent in my attachments, persistent in everything; and my dear wife was as persistent in her instincts and habits as I was in mine. It was not from love of change that, after leaving Carburton Street, we more than once sought a fresh place of abode, but from what seemed at the moment absolute necessity,—from considerations connected with health, convenience and economy.

From Midsummer, 1853, to Midsummer, 1856, we resided at 22, Conduit Road, Woolwich; from Midsummer, 1856, to Midsummer, 1857, at a small red peculiarly built house in Laurel Grove, Penge, Surrey; from Midsummer, 1857, to Midsummer, 1861, at 8, Hamilton Terrace, Bloomfield Road,

Plumstead. At Midsummer, 1861, we came to No. 2, Stanhope Cottages, Woolwich Road, Bexley Heath, Kent, where we have for seventeen years lived, and where my dear wife died.

Woolwich we liked, for it is lively and convenient ; but we found it to be unhealthy by reason of the swamps on both sides of the river. Penge we liked for its nearness to fine scenery, and pretty walks ; but we found it to be damp and lonely. The loneliness has disappeared, for Penge has grown from a small straggling hamlet into a town.

In 1854 my dear wife had a dangerous illness. Mrs. Haselden came to nurse her daughter. This was the last time Alice saw her excellent mother.

Of myself and my poor affairs I have no wish to speak, except in so far as they received sanctification from my dear wife's nobleness. My life has been a folly and a failure ; but if it had not been so, if I had not been assailed evermore by pain and poverty, I should not have known the virtues, the gifts, the graces treasured in this woman's soul. My own imbecile and barren career is not worth a moment's attention. It began in the wildest romance, and it has ended in the hardest, coldest prose. Singularly unromantic, my dear wife had no sympathy with my romantic visions. She knew that existence is rooted in stern, in tragical realities. Over these she threw the veil of religion, and she would not have been unwilling to throw over them the lustre of poetry.

But she felt that romance must ever lead astray. Yet she was married to the most romantic of men.

She could not hinder the most romantic of men from acting in the most romantic, that is the most preposterous fashion, could not hinder him from chasing the phantoms of idealism. But she went along her own path without regard to his hallucinations, rebuked his meteoric waywardness with nothing except the steadiness of her own starry light.

Bexley Heath became the home Alice had hungered for so long. Shortly after we came to Bexley Heath, my dear wife and Bessie began to attend the Congregational Chapel. Alice never looked so happy as when she came from the Sunday morning service. What was emotional and devotional in religion had great power over her; dogmas wearied, arguments about dogmas worried her. To God as an Almighty Father she in the secrecy and solemnity of her soul bowed. In His goodness, in His love she believed, though there was so little in her own lot to justify the belief. The rest of the Sunday she spent in reading the Bible or hymn books, or in listening while Bessie played hymn tunes, and Bessie and I sang Alice's favourite hymns. Sometimes when the weather was fine, and when the labours of the previous week had not been too fatiguing, my dear wife attended the Sunday evening service. Holy days were my dear wife's only holidays.

None can need more than Alice needed the

repose which Sunday brings to the weary, can yearn more than she yearned for the spiritual refreshment which Sunday offers to souls hungering for the bread, thirsting for the waters of life. If to labour is to pray, she prayed without ceasing. On Sunday, the welcome season of calm contemplation, and pious aspiring and commune, came.

Though Alice trod the way of the cross with a valiant and unmurmuring spirit, and though, spite of an organisation keenly sensitive to pain, she bore sublimely her long crucifixion, she never professed, as so many religious enthusiasts have professed to rejoice in affliction ; she never said, as so many silly people with questionable sincerity say, that all is for the best. She did not love the way of the cross, and she was too frank and truthful to say that she loved it. Of existence, and of its innocent pleasures, she had a genuine relish. Little, very little would have sufficed to make her completely happy. That little was withheld, and she was not ashamed often to avow that she thought this hard. Her heart as well as her intellect rebelled against that spurious submission to Providence, which is only a form of insensibility. He, from whom the Christians take their name, but whom so few Christians resemble, prayed that he might not be compelled to drink the cup of bitterest woe. When cup after cup of anguish was held to the lips of Alice, she drank, but with no parade of courage. The tragedy, both for her and for me, was that we had to wear our life out in darkest anxieties, and

in fruitless, most arid drudgeries. We frequently confessed to each other that poverty intensifies all miseries a hundredfold. There are in England the rich and the wretched, many different kinds of poverty. Common enough in England is the poverty arising from improvidence and intemperance, or crime, or from sudden reverses of fortune, or from exhausting and unremunerative occupation, or from the long illness of those called by the homely, but expressive name of breadwinners. Throwing, however, for the time other classifications aside, we may say that in England there are two sorts of poverty, the poverty of squalor, and the poverty of struggle. Now the poverty of squalor may be very terrible in England; but the Poor Law, however otherwise objectionable, keeps the poverty of squalor from attaining its utmost possible extremes. Multitudes of the English are so thriftless, so recklessly thriftless, as to have no dread of the Workhouse. Yet only where that dread exists can the poverty of squalor be said to be felt. On the other hand what vast hosts the poverty of struggle seizes in its cruel grasp! England is enslaved by conventionalism, and few men, few women in England are brave and frank enough to live their own individual and spontaneous life. The poverty of struggle may therefore in countless cases spring from the bondage to appearances, and then it does not deserve much pity. But it may spring from the most honourable causes; from an ideal too lofty of independence; from exalted and unbending principles; from an

excess of sympathy ; from heroic devotedness to the truth for the truth's sake ; from hatred of the low arts by which success is usually won ; from the self-depreciation which seldom fails to accompany a divine conception of duty. Let, however, the causes be what they may, the poverty of struggle is far more awful than the poverty of squalor, forasmuch as while torturing and consuming the body, it continually and profoundly wounds the soul, whereas in the poverty of squalor it is the body which chiefly suffers, for remove the cold, the hunger, and the nakedness, the poverty of squalor ceases. In the poverty of struggle there are inevitably great privations, especially where there is the brave determination to bear the worst rather than to get into debt. But the privations are not the chief affliction. The whole existence is joyless, hopeless ; a thousand secret cares haunt and harass ; a thousand humiliations bruise the spirit ; there is absolute isolation ; the body faints from utter weariness, faints from excess of toil, yet gloom and foreboding, and petty anxieties, and mighty miseries keep the eyes wakeful in the lonely night. How unspeakably also in the poverty of struggle, the anguish is sharpened by the desertion of friends, of the friends above all whom we have made the most generous sacrifices to serve, and who have uttered the loudest protestations of fervent, and unswerving fidelity. Now I from youth was a dreamer of dreams. It was natural, therefore, and perchance it was strictly just, that the poverty of

struggle should claim me as one of its victims. I was more than a dreamer of dreams; I thought I was destined to teach under the name of individualism, the most regenerative doctrine that had ever leavened and moulded the world. Yet I was grievously conscious of my unfitness to give the doctrine prophetic fervour, eloquent expression, conquering contagiousness. Shy, sensitive, and proud, I had the prophet's faith, ardour, and pertinacity, but I had not the prophet's boldness, not what in the cant of these days is called self-assertion. When I rose to address an audience the slightest trifle sufficed to disconcert me, and, once fluttered, I could not recover my self-possession, and rushed on wildly, scarcely conscious of what I said. Now it was the misfortune of Alice Haselden, not merely to be married to the most romantic of men, a dreamer of dreams, but to be married to a man, who thought that he had a grand prophetic and redeeming mission. In threefold fashion Alice Haselden was rudely and mercilessly flung into the poverty of struggle; from the tribulations brought by inevitable circumstances and cruel persecutions; from those the result of her husband's idealism; and from such as had their source in her husband's prophetic vocation.

When I recall my dear wife's divine virtues, and her long crucifixion, profound remorse mingles with profound regret. There is in my nature too much tenderness, not too little, and I could not intentionally give pain to any one. To Alice

Haselden I never intentionally gave pain, and as I am not exacting or self-indulgent, and as with the proverbial Spartan simplicity, I always strive to narrow my needs, I did not unnecessarily increase her labours and troubles. But I was too readily irritated, and when irritated I said hard and harsh things which must have seemed alike unfeeling and ungrateful to my dear wife, who was expending her whole existence for the happiness of her husband and her daughter. My hard harsh utterances were followed by immediate repentance, but they had already wounded the saintliest of souls.

I have remorse, the most harrowing remorse from a far deeper cause. My dear wife was slain by the poverty of struggle, for the disease of which she died, had manifestly been brought on by toils enormously disproportioned to her feeble force. Now I the dreamer, the idealist, the prophet, might have been still more the dreamer, the idealist, the prophet, and yet have given to my ordinary avocations, and what I deemed my divine vocations, a more practical and effectual shape. If I had done so, I could have made the life of Alice much more easy and comfortable, could have saved her from fatigues and anxieties, could perchance have saved her from a horrible malady, and lengthened her career by a dozen years full of enjoyment and peace. But the shyness, which in my boyhood and youth was my folly and my misery, has ever since proved my curse. The most sympathetic of mortals, the most keenly alive to the delights and the duties

of friendship, I shrank nevertheless from publicity, shrank from contact with my fellows. An enthusiast for certain ideas and ideals, I yet shunned the only modes and means by which they could gain empire on the earth. Abhorring literature as a profession, yet resigned to live by literature so far as honour permitted, I yet neglected the most allowable fashions of extending my literary relations. More and more I became a recluse, seeing from time to time a few old and faithful friends, but completely cut off from intercourse with the rest of mankind. Yet all the while my heart was yearning and pining for companionship. On the 1st October, 1877, died at the age of more than eighty, a worthy Irish gentleman, called Francis Murphy. My occasional walks with the witty, genial, and truehearted Murphy, almost alone varied the monotony of my existence during the ten years that he sojourned near me. What could be more insane, than that by self-distrust I should increase an isolation already so dismal and disastrous? The habit of retirement grows insensibly like all habits, and when once formed can scarcely ever be broken. But that I should have allowed the habit of retirement to gain such dominion over me was cowardly as well as unwise. I, and I only should have borne the penalty of my poltroonery and stupidity. It was, however, on Alice, my beloved Alice, that it fell. And why should I not to my last hour be crucified by remorse, as she was crucified by disease? It would have been

supreme bliss for me and my daughter to die the day our greatly suffering saint died. But I feel that I must live on till the measure of my remorse is full.

Philosophy and religion alike tell us that all things flow from inevitable and inexorable necessity, and that regrets and remorses are foolish, because unavailing. But they who have loved tenderly and truly, cannot thrust regrets and remorses from their soul. Would they even if they could? Do not regrets and remorses hallow as much as they torture? Are not they whom we mourn, transfigured by them in our imaginations, and still more in our hearts? And are not we ourselves transfigured by that transfigurement? From sorrow, as from whatsoever is exalted in human nature, and human experience, all utilitarian considerations, all despotic mechanical rules should be banished. We cannot be grateful to God for taking from us those who are the life of our life. It is not religion—it is the pedantry of religion—to thank God for making the whole of our coming years dark. But in reproaching God for his cruelty we are driven to ask ourselves whether we have not been far more cruel than He. How strenuously soever we have laboured and combated, we are not entitled to say that we have done what we could, if we have allowed a childish sensitiveness to hinder us from putting forth the whole pith and plenitude of our faculties. No doubt they who dream as I have dreamed, and who display the childish

sensitiveness which I have displayed, are tempted to believe that God is sure to work miracles for the triumph of the doctrine to which they have consecrated their career. They awake when too late from their grievous delusion. God's work must always be done by some one, if not by him of finer, then by him of coarser mould. Our vile and vulgar age is so eager to applaud those who have succeeded by indomitable impudence, that it passes by the idealist with contempt, and treats him with cold indifference. For that reason, even if for no other reason, the idealist should make his voice heard with the valour of an ancient prophet. If he is silent, and if he shrinks from the scenes where men are gathered together, hungry for novelty, yet perchance in their deepest heart hungrier for truth, he simply surrenders the world to the effrontery of charlatans, and he is disloyal to his mission, and scoffers say, and cannot be blamed for saying that by his disloyalty he dooms his loved ones to misery. Saint my dear Alice must always have been; but why, O why, did I make her through my weakness and cowardice, and folly, a martyr?

I write to honour the dead. It may be said that we best honour the dead by imitating the virtues of the dead. But the real, the divine virtues are of spontaneous growth; they spring from the soil, they are fed by the living waters, of individuality. They accept, they obey no foreign law; they need, they borrow no foreign life. I

could not imitate the virtues of my dear wife, they were so grandly, so distinctively her own. Best can I honour her by striving more and more to manifest what is most Godlike in my own soul.

It is far from my wish to represent my dear wife as a perfect being, for in perfect beings I do not believe. Where or what is the standard of perfection? There must be many standards of perfection, according as a man or a woman prefers one virtue or one class of virtues to another. We may say that he or she is the most perfect being who is the purest or the most charitable, or who has the deepest faith in God. A very generous man will think him the most perfect being who is more generous than himself. Sometimes we may esteem him the most perfect being who has the virtues we find it easiest, sometimes him who has the virtues we find it hardest, to practise. The conventional standard of perfection is not lofty, and it pays homage mainly to negative virtues. I rejoice that my dear wife would have seemed very faulty when tested by the conventional standard. She had that originality of saintliness which is as rare as the originality of genius. No one like her has ever been born; no one like her can ever be born. If the most unfortunate of men, as I certainly am the most foolish of men, I can at least exult in the belief that for more than thirty-six years my destiny was blent with the destiny of one whom angels might have adored, and whom they are perchance now adoring.

It is saints such as my dear wife was that the world needs ; natural saints, spontaneous saints, who find it not an arduous thing, but the easiest of all things to be saints. Alice Haselden could not help being a saint ; she had no temptations to resist, no obstacles to vanquish, did not torture herself with self-examination, in order to repel sin, and to be spotless and blameless. If holiness is simply spiritual health, then she was holy as few have been holy. According to the current notions they alone are holy who are in a state of spiritual disease, and who brood morbidly on their morbid condition. Philosophers and preachers tell us to look within ; they could not give a more perilous counsel, a more pernicious command. All the self-knowledge we need is taught us by our daily duties and daily trials. Introspection besides being an unwholesome habit does not really enrich us with self-knowledge. It unveils simply a portion of our nature, and while unveiling it disrupts and distorts. In a double sense wholeness is holiness. The holy man must be an undivided unity, and this undivided unity must be free from every taint and ailment. If you are to accept the customary delineations and inculcations of theologians and preachers, then saintliness is an incessant and desperate struggle. The conventional saint is always on the point of falling away from God into evil courses. To the real saint, prayer is an incense and a song ; to the conventional saint it is a battering ram, with which he is evermore beating

down the walls of the citadel of Satan. It is thought that a man cannot become a saint unless he undergoes a certain process called conversion. But what need is there of conversion when there is an exuberance of natural goodness? It is not unusual to say of certain persons that they are too good; and they are too good for a wicked world, and for the selfish and designing mortals with whom they come into contact. The theological conception of the saint makes the assurance of salvation the main thing to be sought. Now, hereby, despondency and dread are engendered in the soul of the timid and humble, and spiritual pride in the soul of the bold and the confident. In the long array of Christian Martyrs and Christian Saints do I find nothing to admire? I find much to admire, yea, even to adore. Yet how much do I not also find to condemn? Is not the soul stimulated to phrenzy by the dream, the hope of eternal bliss? Compared with everlasting joy, how insignificant are the troubles, the torments of earth! Consciously or unconsciously the expectation of reward is the supreme motive. Now, how greatly the saintliness which is calm and deep, and spontaneous, and unselfish, transcends the saintliness which lives on unnatural excitement, and is fascinated and fired by the most magnificent of bribes! Alice Haselden had earnest faith in immortality. But in that earnest faith there was no selfishness; she longed to be with her God, and with the cherished ones who had gone to

the bosom of God before her. She loved much, and she felt that she must love for ever, felt that she must be for ever with the Lord, to create a heaven even in heaven itself, for those who had been plucked by death from her boundless devotedness.

It was well for Alice Haselden that I was naturally a believer, was always inclined to believe rather too much than too little, never forsook a creed except to embrace a creed both deeper and higher, had no proselytising tendency, abhorred scepticism and latitudinarianism. I could seldom make clear to her that as a religious reformer I did not assail, and had no desire to assail essential perennial realities. She was not a bigot; along with the intensest earnestness she had, as every true saint must have, the sweetest, most genial catholicity. But she stood by the ancient ways for two reasons; the new ways offended her sense of delicacy and dignity; and to travel along the new ways would have severed her from the real home and the ideal home of her heart. Saints are not philosophers, and assuredly they are not reformers. They hate wrong, they detest impiety. Yet their only protest against wrong, is the radiance of their own righteousness; their only protest against impiety is the odour of their own sanctity. They have the belief also, the abiding and abounding belief, that the triumph of the wicked must be transient, that puny man how bold and bad soever, cannot resist Omnipotence,

must be though he knows it not, and though we see it not, an instrument of providential action.

There are few natives of Lancashire, who have not both Lancashire wit and Lancashire humour, and Alice Haselden had the wit and the humour of the region where she was born. Indeed, besides the wit and the humour she had many Lancashire characteristics. She had not any perceptible Lancashire accent, but unconsciously and oftener still consciously she made use of Lancashire words and Lancashire phrases, and she was fond of Lancashire jests and Lancashire stories. When she wished to express herself pungently and pithily the Lancashire speech came of itself to her lips. Mainly, however, as making fresh and fragrant Auld Lang Syne, was the Lancashire dialect so dear to her. Ere sickness prostrated her, never was her smile so beautiful, her laugh so hearty, as when with a Lancashire proverb or jest or tale, she made the old Lancashire days, the old Lancashire associations vivid to herself, vivid to us. The face which gleamed with so much innocent joyfulness, with such childlike pleasure, was to grow the saddest of faces from pain, and from patience and resignation battling wearily with pain, and half afraid to be vanquished in the awful conflict.

How much of our moral life perishes when a noble being very dear to us dies? At first it might seem as if bereavement merely wounded our affections; but it shatters our whole moral

being. There is an instinctive revolt against merciless destiny, and that of itself suffices to put us into an unhealthy moral condition. More awful, however, far more awful is the absolute annihilation of moral succor, sustenance and sympathy. What death is I knew not till thou, O Alice Haselden, didst die! Yet it is not the tragical desolation which alone I feel; no less I feel the moral impoverishment, the moral paralysis. From thee, beloved Alice, virtue went forth as from the miraculous garment of Christ. Thy restraining was a constraining power; thy constraining was a consecrating power. Instincts, impulses, inspirations, were evermore stirring my soul, streaming from my soul. Thou didst give them purpose and concentration. To earth thou didst bring me back when I was soaring to heaven, but only in order that I might soar to a grander and a grander sphere. To a grander and a grander sphere I should perchance have soared if thou hadst lived, if thou hadst not been doomed to climb a hundred Calvaries. Gazing on that long array of Calvaries I am consumed by pity, by love, by regret, by remorse; but moral vigour I have not, for it was from thee that my moral vigour flowed. I am not a sentimentalist, and verily thou wast not a sentimentalist. All emotion in thee was real, everything in thee was real, even as Nature is real. Now thou and I were wholly unlike each other, and we might appear to be wholly unsuited for each other. Were not jars and jinglings inevitable? Yea;

but the jars and the janglings did not affect our faith in each other. Never didst thou doubt my earnestness and sincerity, and assuredly it would have been mad and monstrous if I had doubted thine.

This is not and it is not intended to be an artistic production; it is the passionate and compassionate utterance of a man incapable of any vice, but capable of ten thousand follies; a man joining to the fervour of a Hebrew prophet, the sportiveness of a child. I should have been a *Miserrimus* even if I had not been a *Stultissimus*, but being a *Stultissimus* how could I fail to be a *Miserrimus*? Now Alice Haselden knew that I was a foolish creature, the most foolish of foolish creatures. Yet she likewise knew that though I might be guilty of the most preposterous absurdities, I had an opulent basis of common sense, and she knew that I could not do any base or vile, or dishonourable thing, and she knew that I was prone to self-denial and self-sacrifice, and she knew that like herself I could toil, and toil, and toil, and suffer, and suffer, and suffer unto death. When Alice Haselden and I were thrown far apart by incompatibilities of temper of a manifold kind, we were brought back to each other by the divine voice of duty. What my countrymen call *blateneßs*, has always been, as I have said, my cardinal error, my besetting sin. But I am guilty of it even toward myself; and why should I not be guilty of it toward others? Toward all

human beings I was *blate* ; toward Alice Haselden I was the *blatest* of the *blate*. I had never the courage, the frankness to avow to Alice Haselden that I had the ambition to be a great moral and religious reformer. I was, and am a sort of Iceland among men ; bound in Arctic chains, yet exploding volcanically. Equatorial thunders and lightnings, and earthquakes, Alice Haselden might have learned to bear ; the Icelandic outbursts she could not bear, because she could not understand them. Here again I wish to make clear that if there was anything wrong in my household existence, the fault was wholly mine. I was too *blate* to make generous advances, and I was too proud to make confessions and consequently concessions.

It may be said that a woman who is supremely a saint should not marry at all ; that her natural vocation is that of a Sister of Charity. But whatsoever is natural is right, and whatsoever is unnatural is wrong. What is noblest in human nature ? Its passions, its affections. We have to purify, to exalt, to transfigure them ; yet woe unto us if we starve or strangle them ! Let them simply work in harmony with the other elements of human nature : but let them never be denounced as in themselves sinful. If Alice Haselden had been a Sister of Charity she would not have been more a saint, but less a saint. Saintly as a daughter, saintlier as a wife, she was saintliest as a mother. Alice Haselden would have been

more demonstrative toward me if I had not been so proud, and if my pride had not sometimes worn the garb of contempt. Against my pride she entrenched herself in reserve ; against my disdain, in her natural dignity. Her rebukes were silent rebukes. If they had been spoken rebukes they might have been less effectual immediately, but they would ultimately have had a more wholesome influence. The most genial of men, I yet could be suddenly thrown into the most ungenial moods by my petulance and pettishness ; the most childlike of men, I could now and then be the most childish of men. My childishness, however, never became pettiness. I never ceased to be magnanimous. I was never rancorous. Tortured from youth by hypochondriasis, I was prone to every kind of monomania ; whatsoever I imagined, I believed. Foolishly trustful, I could nevertheless be just as foolishly jealous. Habitually unsuspecting, I could not hinder my suspicions from assuming mad aspects, monstrous proportions. Indifferent to praise, spurning the mob, I yearned for appreciation, yearned to give and receive sympathy. A man of action more than a man of thought, I was condemned to a wretched life of literary drudgery. These were some of the perplexities, some of the complexities with which Alice Haselden had to deal as a wife, as a counsellor, as a guide, and I may add as a judge. She was never too severe as a judge ; as a counsellor, and a guide, she was invariably wise ; as a wife she was

always unselfish, noble and devoted, and if geniality and congeniality were apparently lacking, they were essentially present. By laying aside my haughtiness, I could have made them flow and glow. Many things having combined to humble me, and to teach me patience, I, a few years before my dear wife's last terrible illness, bowed my disdainful brow, and all the sweetness and softness of her nature at once streamed forth. But whether our relations were cordial or not, Alice Haselden was ever an immense and inexhaustible source to me of moral vitality. We could not be seriously estranged from each other; we had suffered too much, and too long together to rush in wrath even into an hour's estrangement, and if bitter words provoked bitter words, it was generally adverse fate, it was depression, despair, we had to blame, and not our character or our temper. Many things disheartened us; nothing soured us. We envied no one, we maligned no one; we were helpful whenever it was in our power to be so. Quick, miraculously quick in every respect, Alice Haselden had a quick temper; but her quick temper was simply the impelling force of her faculties. That with a temper so quick she could be so calm and submissive when tortured by years of sickness, made the serenity, the submissiveness the more beautiful and holy. Through her patience and resignation, and through my compassion for her woes, I was hallowed as I could not otherwise have been. The moral, the spiritual life which

gushed from her soul into mine increased just in the degree that her own bodily life was hastening to extinction. Thus then since the death of my beloved, I have felt no less morally and spiritually despoiled and debilitated, than unspeakably desolate. No doubt other bereaved ones must have had similar experiences, and it must have seemed to them that brokenhearted, and robbed of moral sustenance, there was no moral debility or moral debasement into which they were not capable of falling.

Cowardly creatures that we are, how often we say with our lips that God is merciful, when our innermost soul is crying in its great anguish that Nature is cruel! I have lost my only friend; and am I to be grateful for the loss? If Alice Haselden was the food and the force of my moral life, she was equally the food and the force of my sympathetic life, not by prodigal displays of attachment, which were incompatible with her reserve, her dignity, her delicacy, but by heroically sharing my afflictions, and tenderly caring for me in my frequent, and often formidable maladies. She who was the least demonstrative of women, became the most demonstrative of women, the moment sickness assailed our daughter or me. What could we do for her compared with what she had done for us? Yet during her illness this divine being forgot that she had ever done anything for us at all, spoke as if she had been always in the same helpless and dependent

position to which an awful disease had condemned her. Except my dear daughter, who is as forlorn as I am, or more forlorn still, no one heedeth whether I live or die. And except for my dear daughter's sake, I have no wish to live. If I can make her path smoother than that of her mother, I may perchance atone in some degree for having been too often unjust to her mother. It was part of the injustice, that in certain petulant moods, I questioned the warmth of that affection whose depth I could not question. Ah ! it is persons of warm manners whom we always trust, and it is they who always betray and desert us ; it is persons of deep natures whom we always distrust, and it is they alone who are faithful evermore. It is now I feel that Alice Haselden was the food and the force of my sympathetic life, because her affections were deep, and that she could not have been so if her manner habitually had been fervid, and demonstrative. Her affections were sacred treasures only to be brought forth when the golden lamps were lighted on the altar of devotedness and duty. Of emotional sympathy I have much, too much, more perhaps than any man or woman of this generation. But emotional sympathy does not nourish emotional sympathy ; it exhausts it. My sympathy is profound and persistent, as well as emotional ; yet it is pre-eminently emotional. Now if my dear wife's sympathy, besides being deep, had been exuberantly extravagantly emotional like mine, it would have

increased the tendency which my sympathy spontaneously had to spread itself over too vast a surface. Alice Haselden deepened, purified, sanctified my sympathy by narrowing its range. Thus, as in so much else, she was my saviour, when in my folly and blindness I was inclined to deem her my enemy. O pity me, my dear Alice! O pardon me, my dear Alice! O pray for me, my dear Alice! God was so merciless to thee while thou wast on earth, that surely now He can refuse nothing to thy prayers. O that He would give thee back for a single hour to me, that I might tell thee not of my love, and regret, and remorse alone, but of my miraculous perception of thy miraculous attributes: Yet if thou wert with me for an hour, how could I let the cold, the dark, the solitary grave seize thee once more? Dead! Dead! Dead! Thy sepulchre turns the Universe to a sepulchre. Who can roll away the stone? None can roll it away; it shuts not thy sepulchre alone; it lies heavy and horrible on my heart. What misery was mine when first I saw thy strength declining! But deeper misery came when I saw thee stretched wan and wasted on a bed of sickness; deeper still when I saw thee writhing in anguish; deeper still when I saw thee die; deeper still when I saw thee lying in thy coffin; deeper still when I saw thy coffin sinking into the grave. Yet to feel and know after weary and desolate weeks, that thou art indeed dead is deepest misery. Dead! Dead! Dead!

Ah ! Time is not a consoler, as men in their feebleness and folly and falsehood say. It is time that reveals to us what is awful in death ; it is only time that discloses to us the immensity of the abyss, and the tragedy of the contrast. How otherwise than from time, can we learn how much we have lost ? At first we are too crushed by the blow to be overwhelmed by the blank. The blow is madness ; the blank is despair. We rush from chamber to chamber of our lonely home, half from restlessness, and half from longing for the beloved one. We touch, we kiss the raiment she last wore ; we sit down in her favourite chair ; we kneel by the bed whereon she died, and passionately pray to her, not to God. She is more to us than the mother of Jesus was ever to the devoutest, the most enthusiastic Catholic. O Protestantism, thou cold and thou barren, why dost thou denounce the worship of Saints, seeing that the worship of the dead is so natural and beautiful ? Me, the most religious of men, as well as the most sympathetic, fools and Pharisees have called unbeliever, have classed me an ecstatic believer, a believer in all the realities and idealities of the Universe, with those who believe nothing. The bigots who burned Bruno and Vanini, and who persecuted or killed diviner men than they, did so in the name of faith ; and Jesus Son of Man, and Son of God, was put to death as a blasphemer. In all ages it is the misfortune of the valiant and loving souls that

glow with faith, to be confounded with the vile monsters that abhor faith, and that do their utmost to annihilate it. But even if I, forlorn creature, were the most unbelieving, instead of the most believing of men, I should be brought back to faith by the worship of the dead, by the adoration of Alice Haselden, whom I may name as the Catholics name the Virgin—Our Lady of Succor. Comte and Mill have made the Worship of the dead ludicrous and contemptible, because Comte was crazily vain, and because Mill had never eaten religious manna in the desert of sorrow, and because he mistook sentimentalism, spurious, or superficial, or artificial feeling for genuine emotion. Now I so far from being vain, am prone to self-depreciation, and my emotion, though it may often lead me astray, is always thorough and true. But across everything I say or do, rushes that fatal element of romance which I inherit from my mother, just as from my father I inherit my hypochondriasis and my melancholy. The eldest of twelve children, six sons, and six daughters, I was born when my mother, herself sprung from romantic relations, was not much more than twenty years of age. She said, and every one said, that I was a beautiful child, supremely gifted, incomparably and inordinately loving. When I was told that I was a beautiful child, a supremely gifted child, I turned away with indifference or disdain; for there was something in me which always resented praise as insult.

But when love was lavished on me, or even the semblance of love, I was at once vanquished. A man who of old was my intimate friend, but who has since sold himself to the devil, doubtless his natural proprietor, used to say that a kind word made any one how hollow or worthless soever, my master. This is the secret of my whole existence, though the romantic element must not be overlooked. In my boyhood I took many a long and toilsome journey, to pass a few hours or even a few minutes with miscellaneous mortals, conspicuous only for that false good fellowship, which from its extreme demonstrativeness is to the young so fascinating. Alas! have I not during the whole of my career been the dupe of false good fellowship? May I not still be as much the dupe thereof as ever? Must I not be more foolish than I have been, more wretched than I have been? Against the snares of false good fellowship, or against any snares, what defence have I, the most impressionable of men? What can save me except intense and incessant worship of our Lady of Succor—Alice Haselden, who so often saved me, both when I knew it, and when I knew it not? I must not say that she being dead yet speaketh, for speak not all the dead? Are not the dead more eloquent than the living, few of whom, if God were wise and just, and good, according to the conventional notions of wisdom, justice, and goodness, and were not himself Instinctive Life, should ever have been

gifted with life? It is not among the living, but among the dead that we must seek the elect. In sermons God's word and God's people are incessantly, and often obstreperously paraded, as if the whole universe were not God's word, and as if all God's creatures were not under God's care. But who are the people of God that figure in pulpit discourses? They are either an imaginary race, or they are Pharisees who cheat their creditors, adulterate their goods, diligently attend services and prayer meetings, but are invariably absent when there happens to be a collection. Possibly in more senses than one election and collection go not well together. Never in a critical, or captious, or frivolous spirit, have I entered a temple professedly dedicated to God, or even to Mumbo Gumbo. But then by what I may call the logic of Nature I have discovered not that faith and hypocrisy are identical, for hypocrisy and faith are antagonisms, but that in these modern days, faith and humbug are identical. Evidences of Christianity! Most convincing evidence of all—that a man with religion for ever in his mouth, should after reading the record of Christ's death and Paul's life, hesitate whether to give a shilling or sixpence, or nothing at all, for the evangelisation of the universe!

Now, my Alice, the beautiful, the beloved, was not one of God's people, if Bethelism and Gothamism are to be accepted as manifestations and interpretations of the mysterious life, the One

and the All. She loved God, that is to say, she loved what was sweetest, noblest, divinest in her ideal self, though in Alice Haselden, the real always transcended the ideal, but she did not love evangelical twaddle and evangelical tawdriness. Both she abhorred, or rather from both she turned away with instinctive, with ineffable antipathy. But respecting her antipathies she was still more silent, than respecting her sympathies. She simply went straight on in the rush and richness of her essential nature.

The summer before she died, my dear wife after much persuasion, after much resistance, allowed herself to be photographed. It was the only time her likeness was ever taken in any fashion; very admirably has the artist reproduced the face, torn and tortured by forty or fifty years of affliction. But the face as I first saw it, when Alice was in her twenty-fourth year, was altogether different. Alice in youth had corporeal fullness and freshness; in her latter days she was ghastlier than the ghastliest skeleton. In her youth too her small and beautiful mouth had a treasure of small and beautiful teeth. The teeth were too small and beautiful to endure, and departing they robbed the small and beautiful mouth of its godlike loveliness. But Alice neither complained of the lost beauty of her mouth, nor of the lost vigour of her teeth; she simply marched straight on, and she would simply have marched straight on even if she had been offered the wings of an archangel. By marching straight on Alice Haselden was my Lady of Succor, and is my Lady of Succor. Straight on I

march also, but I have fits of lassitude and disenchantment, sit down by the wayside, think that the goal cannot be reached, or is not worth reaching. To have someone to whom we can confide our real woes, and who can either heal or hallow them is much; to have someone who is a source of strength to us in our imaginary woes is far more. To reason with a monomaniac is absurd, for monomaniacs are the best of all reasoners; they reason too well. Monomania like instinct, is a subtler kind of reason, a more rapid kind of reasoning; there never was any reasoner equal to Rousseau, just because each of the principles from which he started was a monomania. The men styled reasonable, or self-styled reasonable, are of all reasoners the worst. I cannot fall as Rousseau fell, into a monomaniacal condition, but I have monomaniacal moods, and in such moods I am dangerous to others, and still more dangerous to myself, because in such moods I reason with irresistible lucidity and vigour. My mother, who like her unfortunate and foolish eldest son, believed whatsoever she imagined, was by nature intellectually a very inferior logician to my father, but in her monomaniacal passion, she overwhelmed him by the sublimity of her reasoning. As sanity dealing with insanity, Alice Haselden did not attempt to reason with me when I was in a monomaniacal mood; she either divinely appealed to what was divinest in my nature, or she bowed her head in exceeding sorrow, and marched on, or she rebuked my hallucinations by courageous obedience to ordinary

duties. Dead! Dead! Dead! O my Lady of Succor, how often I forget for a few instants that thou art dead, and rush to pour my soul into thine! Then I awake with a shudder, and a pang, to the awful reality.

Thousands of books have been published for the comfort of mourners. But what mourner has ever been by such books comforted? Not very deep must the grief be, that a book can heal. Mourners, as is natural, seek solace in every direction, and from the mechanical character which religion has so long assumed in Christian lands, an artificial apparatus is always forthcoming for every imaginable contingency. As it is thought that a man's whole nature can be changed by a stupid ungrammatical tract, so it is believed that a man's keenest, bitterest sorrow, can be consoled by a shallow showy sophistical declamatory book of the Farrar sort. But a book of the Farrar sort is simply a narcotic, and is as transient in its benefits, and as pernicious in its ultimate effects as other narcotics. Death comes from Nature, and the strength to bear bereavement must come from Nature, that is from the inherent valour of the mourner's soul. Let him accept such solace only as is in consonance with this valour. It may be said that we are hereby thrown back to the point from which Christianity started. But far be it from me to rob the mourning heart of any of the consolations which Christianity offers. I merely maintain that the Ancients had healthier ideas of death than

the moderns ; healthier from being more heroic ; healthier from being more interwoven with profound suggestive and beautiful symbols. We should turn from death to life, from disease to life, as the Ancients turned. Sentimentalism makes everything putrid and paltry in these modern days, and Christian theology is its favourite domain. How rich and robust was the Mediæval theology ! How robust without being rich, was the theology of the Puritans and the Covenanters ! Both theologies were loyal to the old pagan creed that war is the father of all things. And both cherished and consecrated the bravest battlers. But now peace, at whatsoever sacrifice of manhood, of dignity, of honour, is the clamor ; peace though a nation should perish ; peace though everyone should be a poltroon and a slave. Peace also, a spurious and craven peace must envelope and enchant the death-bed ! All religious periodicals, all modern novels, all sermons are crowded with deathbed scenes. What so unlike, what so hostile, to that which was sublime in heathenism, divine in Christianity ! To convert death into the crowning luxury of a human career is as monstrous as it is mischievous. He who is most an imbecile or most a coward, or a compound of both, is the greediest to devour the luxury. The lowest bathos of intellectual cretinism is attained by the tracts which depict the dying believer. It is the noble life which makes adorable the noble death. That a miserable mortal who has lived a wicked life, revelled in every abomination, should when departing

from earth be soothed into serenity, stimulated into ecstasy by jargon about the atonement, is supremely detestable. Contrast the villain, who when about to be hanged, has the tranquillising syrup of the atonement in his mouth, with the self-sustaining grandeur of the North American Indian when about to be burned ! It is often asked, why Christianity which was once so powerful is now so powerless. The answer is that Christianity which was once the incarnation of earnestness, is now the apotheosis of cowardice. What folly it is to say that Christianity must be the religion by excellence, because it emboldens human beings to die quietly or even joyfully, the doctor and the priest having done their utmost, comforts abounding, friends and kinsfolk around ; when we behold the savage expiring, still more quietly or still more joyfully in the midst of the most exquisite tortures ! There is a constitutional apathy which is sometimes dignified with the name of calm ; but is it not as odious as the rapture of the vilest of sinners, instantaneously converted on the verge of the grave ? The follicularies are never tired of praising Goethe's Olympian repose. What however was Goethe's Olympian repose but a form of his manifold selfishness ? His Olympian repose has been ascribed to his Spinozism, as if the acceptance of a philosophical system could achieve a spiritual transfiguration. It has been averred too that Goethe, as a great poetical artist, dwelt of necessity in indifference and especially in political indifference. But did the great Greek poets dwell

therein, or the great Latin poets? Were not Homer and Virgil preeminently political? And was not Dante, surely a sublimer poet than Goethe, a politician with all the intensity of passion? Was not Milton a political prophet? And how fervent in his political feelings, how vehement in his political utterances was Goethe's illustrious friend and rival Schiller! Olympian repose is not for mortals; and even the gods of Olympus were driven hither and thither by wild storms of emotion. In nature's deepest soul there must be often deeper commotion than ever is beheld in the external universe. Alice Haselden had a calm of her own, a divine calm; but it was far different from the Olympian repose of Goethe, whose nature was not noble, though his genius might be opulent and brilliant. In his Olympian repose Goethe professed to be satisfied with nature, to rejoice in nature, because nature furnished him with boundless materials for curious studies and ingenious speculations. As a mourner rather than seek an artificial rapture, or an artificial peace, I am resigned to dwell in my despair. In me despair vanquishing despair, has long been the only consolation. The rest brought by exhausting anguish yearns for action as a necessity, and for labour as a relief, even if the action may be fruitless and the labour drudgery, the most irksome. It may be a good thing that even without artificial aids from theology or philosophy men in the mass are hopeful; their life would be intolerable otherwise. With the fire of youth a gifted poet sang the Pleasures of

Hope. But never have I felt the Pleasures of Hope since I was as young as Thomas Campbell was when he wrote his famous poem. Inheriting my mother's romantic tendency, her irrepressible, irresistible, inexhaustible hopefulness I inherited not. And it is strange that romance should have swayed so completely and so continually a being so unhopeful. It is with the vapours rising from a black and boundless abyss that I have woven a heaven of rainbows over that abyss. From my boyhood the thought of suicide has been familiar to me, especially in my gloomy hypochondriacal moods. A thousand times I have been tempted to end my barren, miserable, hopeless existence ; a thousand times, when with weary eyes and weary limbs seeking slumbers that came not, I wished, I prayed that I might not see the morrow ! What enabled me to resist the temptation ? The feeling that I was the soldier of God, and that I must fight the fight to the last, even if with despairing heart ; the dread of giving pain to those dear to me, and of leaving them helpless and forlorn ; and the dread equally great, of singularity and notoriety. How often have I been urged by commonplace mortals to look always at the bright side of things ! But have things always a bright side ? To certain men, as to my friend Frederick Burrington, all sides of all things are bright. Such men, however, have by nature superlative exuberant hopefulness. To other men all sides of all things are dark. Very dark, indeed, were they to my friend, Robert Gibson, who died on the 19th July, 1878,

after sufferings long and terrible, comparable with those of my much loved, and much lamented wife. All things are bright to me that my rainbows of romance shine upon ; all things are dark to me from which the light of those rainbows is withheld ! And how transient is the gleam of rainbows ! On the grave of my dearest one also, how can rainbows of romance be created ? I simply allow faith to speak, and to assure me that she is happy—happier far than she ever was on earth ; for hers, as I have said again and again, was a pilgrimage of tribulation.

Have I nothing but words of despair to utter at a grave on which no grass yet grows ? Is God blotted from the universe, because I am unspeakably miserable ? My monotonous wail man hears not and God heeds not. That man hears it not is not a grief to me ; that God heeds it not is more than a grief. And I must continue my monotonous wail till it cleaves through immensity to God's heart. By turns I am more defiant than Prometheus, and more lowly than Christ. Well were it for me if I could be wholly Christ or wholly Prometheus. When more defiant than Prometheus, I think that I have strength to bear a heavier burden of woe than I have borne, and I hurl my malisons at adverse destiny ; when more lowly than Christ I would pray evermore to God, hymn evermore God's compassion and love. Just, however, when I am ready to give myself up wholly to God, to consecrate my entire existence to him, I am assailed

by a host of petty cares, driven back into the old region of entanglement, fatality, ghastliness, and then the defiant Prometheus revives. I have the tortures of Prometheus but not the victories, the sufferings of Christ but not the solaces.

The malady of this age is not scepticism as priests represent ; it is infirmity of will. Hence the power gained by a few men of persistent and indomitable will, but inferior instead of superior to the rest of mankind in nobleness. This age is the most credulous of ages ; it has not the courage or the earnestness to be sceptical, though there is no lack of superficial unbelief, and of foppish doubt. But from infirmity of will how few in these days are free ! In all or nearly all you behold Promethean deification of will one moment, Christ-like abrogation or annihilation of will the next. You are amazed that an insurrection of individuality should so quickly be followed by a resurrection of absolute and abject submissiveness. Have we here two conflicting forces, or in reality only one force ? There is never more than one primordial force operating in the community. This principle is applicable to the whole history of the world from remotest times. Bruno Bauer, who is regarded as the boldest of Biblical critics by his countrymen, has in his work on Christ and the Cæsars, applied the principle to the early Christian centuries. To speak of an age being swayed by a negative influence, is as absurd and as false as to speak of one age being more than another age, an age of transition. Every

age is ruled by a positive force which is also unitive. This force is not identical with the so-called spirit of the age, which in its caprices may have a thousand diversities. Now the ruling force of an age must be a moral force eminently, if not exclusively. In gaining converts to Christianity, Paul the apostle did not take as his war-cry a Hebrew, but a Greek, a Roman idea—the idea of citizenship. The converts had been citizens of some earthly city; they were now made citizens of a heavenly city—the city of God. In the Roman Empire there was simply the expansion of the Roman city; the Church was the symbol, the representation, the incarnation of the heavenly city. Citizenship was on the one hand immensely enlarged, on the other sublimely transfigured. But the enlarged city and the transfigured city were correspondences, and such they continued to be till the end of the Mediæval period, when the character of Christianity totally changed, or rather when the essential life of Christianity died. Protestantism held fast to the idea of the heavenly city, but it wished the individual, not the Church, to typify and embody that city here below. The heavenly city has been growing more and more dim, and the individual, as its type and embodiment, has been growing more and more feeble and inefficient. Vaguely the vision of a divinest city, the vision of immensity, the vision of a mystery lying in the deepest depths of things haunts the individual's soul. He feels himself to be the citizen of the universe, of a

beautiful but terribly mysterious universe ; he is appalled by his own greatness, which means from a different point of view his own littleness. Crowning himself with stars, he yet often laments that he is weaker than the worm. His self-elation glows grandly, and then fades into self-pity and self-contempt. The positive idea which dominates him is that he must resign himself to be the citizen of the universe ; but the idea fills him with fear, not joy, and except in transient seasons of ecstasy and enthusiasm, paralyses his will. For warmth, and comfort, and rest, he fain would return to the tabernacles which his conscience, his aspirations, the illuminations of his spirit, have compelled him to forsake. This is one chief cause of the prevailing credulity, one chief cause of instability of will. Hitherto a new idea, destined to be the primordial idea, has been gladly embraced. From the idea, however, which is next to govern the world, man shrinks with alarm, though persuaded that it must finally be omnipotent, must finally be healing and hallowing. It is partly as an escape from the pressure of the idea that certain fanatics bewilder themselves with socialistic and communistic schemes, as if the world could be socially emancipated, socially regenerated, before the elevation of the individual. The reconciliation, the concordance of the individual's highest ideal of himself with his highest ideal of the universe, must indispensably precede and prepare all social regeneration. No great moral or religious reformer has ever been intentionally a social

reformer. Every great moral or religious reformer has, regarding the community as radically base, made his appeal to the individual, has sought to achieve a total change in the individual's spiritual condition. From millions of transfigured souls, a new and nobler community arises, but not as the result of the reformer's primary design, and even the changed, the converted community is divine only to the extent that it continues to be led and leavened by a few divine souls, those whom we may call in theological language—the elect. Now it must be as ever it hath been ; social regeneration must come from the predominant idea, but it is not social regeneration which the idea aims at accomplishing. Every primordial, moral or religious idea is the simple response to a sentiment and a presentiment, which have long been gaining more and more empire in the heart, so that the idea would shape itself into stalwart majesty, even if no holy or heroic man was to start forth, to proclaim, it. In our own day there is Pantheistic sympathy ; there is also yearning for individualistic valour. The sympathy and the yearning constitute the substance out of which the primordial idea of the future is to clothe itself with limbs and lineaments, from which it is to bound into energetic action. But it is in a Christian atmosphere, and on a Christian scene that the idea has to play its part ; therefore it is timid, tentative, hesitating, more than half-ashamed of itself. The power of Christianity is in its influence on the affections ; with the tenderest

of these it is profoundly intertwined. Paganism ennobled the strongest, emboldened the grandest, passionate. Hence its essential, its incomparable greatness. No longer ennobling the strongest passions, no longer emboldening the grandest passions, but stimulating and satiating the most bestial sensualities, Paganism fell and deserved to fall, for sensuality is as execrable as passion is adorable. Other things for the moment apart, the Christian system is perishing from a similar degeneracy. Christianity which once sweetened and sanctified the affections, now makes them sickly, shallow and spurious. This is why I have varied what I may call my threnodic homily with rhapsodical remarks, which seem far from cognate thereto. Alice Haselden was entirely, was eminently a Christian, in her affections sublimely a Christian; but her affections had a wholeness and a wholesomeness which in Christian men and women are rare. By my worship of affection I am half a Christian, by my worship of passion I am half a Pagan. The best natures give to a religion more than they get from it. Were it not so, religions, though not religion, would speedily die. By the instinct of spontaneous affinity, Alice Haselden seized in Christianity what harmonised with her being, and she enriched and adorned Christianity with more Godlike virtues than Christianity had ever taught. She was free, too, from the age's main malady—infirmity of will; she had strong and healthy will, as she had strong and healthy affection. She had, in truth, no weakness of

any kind except bodily weakness. But the bodily weakness seemed perhaps greater than it was, from its continued conflict with resolute purpose. In the last years, and above all in the last months of Alice Haselden's life, this conflict had, along with an unspeakable sublimity, an overwhelming pathos. Often more than by even the moanings and writhings of anguish, the tossings of weariness, I was moved by the violent trembling of the hands, of the whole body, when the slightest change of position, the slightest movement became needful. Better can I bear to recall everything else in the manifold misery, than the tragical tremblings. To see a saintly soul suffer is sad, deeply sad; but to see a brave soul, that is likewise a saintly soul, vanquished is incomparably sadder. As the sign of complete vanquishment our dear Alice doubtless at last herself felt the weakness more keenly than the pain. The emaciation, the pallor and the pang, what were they all if the fibres had force to do but a hundredth part of what they had so often easily and eagerly done? Death killed our dear Alice, as some of the wild beasts kill their prey, torturing playfully, that the decline of strength might be the more gradual and sure. O Death, thou cowardly murderer, how can I forgive thee? Even in my Christlike moods I must as fiercely, as in my Promethean moods, execrate thee for slaying with such subtle cruelty Alice the holy, Alice the beloved.

The really good and great are never known,

and fortunately for themselves, and for those whose being is intertwined with theirs, they have no wish to be known. The longing for renown is not in itself an ignoble motive, but it is never severed from ignoble motives, and thus it invariably becomes one of the numerous forms of selfishness. I once heard a man of great genius speak of fame with contempt—almost with disgust. But he forgot how hard he had worked for that which he professed to despise. The love of fame is natural, and let those who are influenced by it, not affect to disdain what they strive so strenuously to win. Yet the truly divine souls never dream of glory, dart their radiance as the stars, diffuse their fragrance as the flowers from innermost spontaneousness. What is the strength, the salvation of every land? The devotedness of pure pious mothers, whose life is a sacred life, because it is a secret life. Verily the hidden life is the holy life in every region, and in every age; and is not God the Holy God, because he is the hidden God? It is the unsearchable God whom we should adore, and whom alone in our grandest, that is in our most hidden states, we really adore. Alice Haselden had a hidden existence, and the more it was hidden, the more she was happy. Why then should I lift the veil from a beautiful career, whose sanctity was in its hiddenness? Because my heart is sore with sorrow, and I cannot bear sorrow in silence as my dear wife bore it; because I feel as if I were speaking to her, and she were speaking to me when I speak about her;

because by passionate homage to the dead saint I would atone in some degree for my lack of kindness, and of justice to the living saint; and because I would save from sacrilegious assault the spot where sleeps the divinest of women. O brothers and sisters, I do not ask you to draw near to that spot and to worship. I seek no fellow worshipper. I would fain be alone when I draw near myself thereto. But touch not, I entreat, that hallowed ground with desecrating hand or desecrating foot. Beneath reposes the only being, who ever truly loved me, the only being who ever truly pardoned and pitied me, and much I needed, both forgiveness and compassion; the only being whom I ever found worthy alike of adoration and affection. Farewell, my beloved. Thy path of the Cross is ended.

Bexley Heath,

29th August, 1878.

Epitaph

On a Tombstone in Bexley Heath Churchyard.

Sacred to the Memory of ALICE HASELDEN,
daughter of JOHN HASELDEN, and wife of WILLIAM
MACCALL.

Born 27th January, 1813, at Bolton, Lancashire, she died 17th April, 1878, at Bexley Heath, Kent, after long and most distressing illness, borne with sweetest, holiest patience.

Dutiful daughter, most devoted wife,
Most loving mother, home she sanctified ;
She lived the humblest, purest, noblest life ;
Too holy for this world of woe she died ;
Rich with the gladness of eternal rest,
She sleeps on the Almighty Father's breast.

Semper Infelix.

(1)

Beside the ever restless sea
I think of thee and only thee,
And all that thou hast been to me.

(2)

I raise no wail, I breathe no cry,
I scarcely have the strength to sigh :
How foolish shrieks when loved ones die !

(3)

No tears I shed ; how foolish tears
To fill the gulph of anguished years,
Where battle fears and scorn of fears !

(4)

Thou wast my life, my very heart,
My better self, my better part ;
Still more than what thou wast, thou art.

(5)

The waves break angry on the shore ;
Death, God, they ask me to adore ;
I curse them both for evermore.

(6)

Death, God, are merciless as waves ;
Billows are everlasting graves,
Swallow the brave, spare slaves and knaves.

(7)

Rebellion is the mourner's mood,
And malison the mourner's food ;
He deems none but the Titans good.

(8)

Too proud to pine or to repine,
I loathe what mortals call divine,
For men are baser far than swine.

(9)

Death, God, can kill me ; how I long
To join the sacred countless throng,
That died wild smiting Heaven's wrong.

Wellington Pier, Yarmouth,
21st September, 1878.

Dies Paschalis.

(1)

A year ago I saw thee die ;
What tragic hours had gone before !
But though my heart with grief was sore,
Hope gleamed upon my misery.

(2)

For prayer steeped thy pangs in calm
And broke the arrows of despair,
And made thy worn face wondrous fair,
And bathed it with divinest balm.

(3)

The Easter Eve a tomb thee gave,
And now as one of the reborn
Thou waitest for that Easter morn
Which summons mankind from the grave.

(4)

There is an Easter morn for thee ;
But while I on this earth remain,
With bleeding heart and anguished brain
There is no Easter morn for me.

(5)

Who can love me as thou didst love
With brave sublime devotedness,
That yearned but for the power to bless
While ever serving God above ?

(6)

Thy toil and holiness were one ;
Saint most wast thou when striving bold,
To vanquish troubles manifold ;
By thy strong soul wast thou undone.

(7)

Thy feeble frame thou wouldst not spare,
And in the battle thou wast crushed,
When thy affection fearless rushed
To slay the demons fierce of care.

(8)

Sometimes in hopeful mood I dream
When musing, saint, beside thy tomb,
That all is not unbroken gloom,—
An angel on my path may gleam.

(9)

The angel must by God be sent,
Must from the height of glory sweep,
Must seek me in my sorrow deep,
With love illumine my sombre tent.

Bexley Heath,

17th April, 1879.

Solatio Carens.

Alone, alone, and evermore alone ;
Alone, alone, I evermore must be ;
If I could find a kindred soul like thee
I should not thank the Gods, whose gifts are sown
With niggard or capricious hand, but own
That soul as more than all the Gods to me ;
As more than earth and air and sky and sea,
As too divine for the divinest throne :
Alas ! I yearn in vain and seek in vain ;
Thou noblest, thou most beautiful art dead,
And I must henceforth worship at a tomb ;
A richer, grander heritage of pain
Tells me a kindred soul once lavish shed
Most holy radiance on my life of gloom.

27th January, 1880.

The Brotherhood of the Religious Life.

ON the 22nd January, 1854, an Association was constituted in London called *The Brotherhood of the Religious Life*, taking for basis of existence and bond of union the following principles :—

I. That God as Infinite Universe, as Living Nature, as Fecund Force, as Intelligent Spirit, as Valiant Truth, as Ideal Beauty, as the Fountain of all Mysteries, as Comforter to him that mourns, as Father to him that prays, as Bulwark to him that believes : by supreme necessity exists.

II. That the Religious Sentiment is Eternal.

III. That God supplies the religious sentiment in all ages with suitable and sufficient food.

The objects of the Association are :—

1. To cultivate and feed the sense of the Divine Life and the Divine Love in each brother's soul.

2. To increase and nourish that sense in Society as far as the influence of the Brotherhood extends.

The Brotherhood of the Religious Life will seek to achieve these objects :—

1. By meeting as frequently as possible for spiritual commune, for catholic interpretation of all past and

present religious developments, and for worship as soon as forms of worship can be agreed on at once natural, noble, and beautiful.

2. By building itself in the wisest and most effectual way into an Order of Mercy.

3. By contemplating the lives of holy men.

4. By studying sacred books, mystical books, devotional books, and books of the deepest spiritual philosophy.

5. By bringing the most various and potent agencies to bear on the religious condition of the world, such as works of the kind just mentioned.

6. By each brother endeavouring to be, and praying the Great Father to help him in being, a living gospel in the midst of men.

